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- ART. VI. — 1. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, by J. G. LOCKHART. Five Vols. 12mo. Boston. Otis, Broaders, & Co. 1837.
2. *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* 16mo. London. James Fraser. 1837.

THERE is no kind of writing, which has truth and instruction for its main object, so interesting and popular, on the whole, as biography. History, in its larger sense, has to deal with masses, which, while they divide the attention by the dazzling variety of objects, from their very generality, are scarcely capable of touching the heart. The great objects on which it is employed, have little relation to the daily occupations, with which the reader is most intimate. A nation, like a corporation, seems to have no soul; and its chequered vicissitudes may be contemplated rather with curiosity for the lessons they convey, than with personal sympathy. How different are the feelings excited by the fortunes of an individual, — one of the mighty mass, who in the page of history is swept along the current, unnoticed and unknown. Instead of a mere abstraction, at once we see a being like ourselves, “fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer” as we are. We place ourselves in his position, and see the passing current of events with the same eyes. We become a party to all his little schemes, share in his triumphs, or mourn with him in the disappointment of defeat. His friends become our friends. We learn to take an interest in their characters, from their relation to him. As they pass away from the stage, one after another, and as the clouds of misfortune, perhaps, or of disease, settle around the evening of his own day, we feel the same sadness that steals over us on a retrospect of earlier and happier hours. And when at last we have followed him to the tomb, we close the volume, and feel that we have turned over another chapter in the history of life.

On the same principles, probably, we are more moved by the exhibition of those characters, whose days have been passed in the ordinary routine of domestic and social life, than by those most intimately connected with the great pub-

lic events of their age. What, indeed, is the history of such men, but that of the times? The life of Wellington, or of Bonaparte, is the story of the wars and revolutions of Europe. But that of Cowper, gliding away in the seclusion of rural solitude, reflects all those domestic joys, and, alas! more than the sorrows, which gather round every man's fireside and his heart. In this way, the story of the humblest individual, faithfully recorded, becomes an object of lively interest. How much is that interest increased in the case of a man like Scott, who, from his own fireside, has sent forth a voice to cheer and delight millions of his fellow men; whose life, indeed, passed within the narrow circle of his own village, as it were, but who, nevertheless, has called up more shapes and fantasies within that magic circle, acted more extraordinary parts, and afforded more marvels for the imagination to feed on, than can be furnished by the most nimble-footed, nimble-tongued traveller, from Marco Polo down to Mrs. Trollope, and that literary Sindbad, Captain Hall.

Fortunate as Sir Walter Scott was in his life, it is not the least of his good fortunes, that he left the task of recording it to one so competent as Mr. Lockhart; who, to a familiarity with the person and habits of his illustrious subject, unites such entire sympathy with his pursuits, and such fine tact and discrimination in arranging the materials for their illustration. We have seen it objected, that the biographer has somewhat transcended his lawful limits, in occasionally exposing what a nice tenderness for the reputation of Scott should have led him to conceal. But, on reflection, we are not inclined to adopt these views. It is, indeed, difficult to prescribe any precise rule, by which the biographer should be guided in exhibiting the peculiarities, and still more the defects, of his subject. He should, doubtless, be slow to draw from obscurity those matters which are of a strictly personal and private nature, particularly when they have no material bearing on the character of the individual. But whatever the latter has done, said, or written, to others, can rarely be made to come within this rule. A swell of panegyric, where every thing is in broad sunshine, without the relief of a shadow to contrast it, is out of nature, and must bring discredit on the whole. Nor is it much better, when a sort of twilight mistification is spread over a man's actions, until, as in the case of all biographies of Cowper previous to

that of Southey, we are completely bewildered respecting the real motives of conduct. If ever there was a character above the necessity of any management of this sort, it was Scott's; and we cannot but think that the frank exposition of the minor blemishes which sully it, by securing the confidence of the reader in the general fidelity of the portraiture, and thus disposing him to receive, without distrust, those favorable statements in his history, which might seem incredible, as they certainly are unprecedented, is, on the whole, advantageous to his reputation. As regards the moral effect on the reader, we may apply Scott's own argument for not always recompensing suffering virtue, at the close of his fictions, with temporal prosperity, — that such an arrangement would convey no moral to the heart, whatever; since a glance at the great picture of life would show, that virtue is not always thus rewarded.

In regard to the literary execution of Mr. Lockhart's work, the public voice has long since pronounced on it. A prying criticism may, indeed, discern a few of those contraband epithets, and slipshod sentences, more excusable in *young* "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," where, indeed, they are thickly sown, than in the production of a grave Aristarch of British criticism. But this is small game, where every reader of the least taste and sensibility must find so much to applaud. It is enough to say, that in passing from the letters of Scott, with which the work is besprinkled, to the text of the biographer, we find none of those chilling transitions, which occur on the like occasions in more bungling productions; as, for example, in that recent one, in which the unfortunate Hannah More is done to death by her friend Roberts. On the contrary, we are sensible only to a new variety of beauty in the style of composition. The correspondence is illumined by all that is needed to make it intelligible to a stranger, and selected with such discernment, as to produce the clearest impression of the character of its author. The mass of interesting details is conveyed in language richly colored with poetic sentiment, and at the same time without a tinge of that mysticism, which, as Scott himself truly remarked, "will never do for a writer of fiction, no, nor of history, nor moral essays, nor sermons"; but which, nevertheless, finds more or less favor in our own community, at the present day, in each and all of these.

The second work which we have placed at the head of this article, and from which the last remark of Sir Walter's was borrowed, is a series of notices originally published in "*Fraser's Magazine*," but now collected, with considerable additions, into a separate volume. Its author, Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies, is a gentleman of the Scotch bar, favorably known by translations from the German. The work conveys a lively report of several scenes and events, which, before the appearance of Lockhart's book, were of more interest and importance than they can now be, lost, as they are, in the flood of light which is poured on us from that source. In the absence of the sixth and last volume, however, Mr. Gillies may help us to a few particulars, respecting the closing years of Sir Walter's life, that may have some novelty, — we know not how much to be relied on, — for the reader. In the present notice of a work so familiar to most persons, we shall confine ourselves to some of those circumstances which contributed to form, or have an obvious connexion with, his literary character.

Walter Scott was born at Edinburgh, August 15th, 1771. The character of his father, a respectable member of that class of attorneys, who in Scotland are called Writers to the Signet, is best conveyed to the reader by saying, that he sat for the portrait of Mr. Saunders Fairford, in "*Redgauntlet*." His mother was a woman of taste and imagination, and had an obvious influence in guiding those of her son. His ancestors, by both father's and mother's side, were of "gentle blood," — a position which, placed between the highest and the lower ranks in society, was extremely favorable, as affording facilities for communication with both. A lameness in his infancy, — a most fortunate lameness for the world, if, as Scott says, it spoiled a soldier, — and a delicate constitution, made it expedient to try the efficacy of country air and diet; and he was placed under the roof of his paternal grandfather at Sandy-Knowe, a few miles distant from the capital. Here his days were passed in the open fields, "with no other fellowship," as he says, "than that of the sheep and lambs"; and here, in the lap of Nature,

"Meet nurse for a poetic child,"

his infant vision was greeted with those rude, romantic scenes, which his own verses have since hallowed for the

pilgrims from every clime. In the long evenings, his imagination, as he grew older, was warmed by traditionary legends of border heroism and adventure, repeated by the aged relative, who had herself witnessed the last gleams of border chivalry. His memory was one of the first powers of his mind, which exhibited an extraordinary developement. One of the longest of these old ballads, in particular, stuck so close to it, and he repeated it with such Stentorian vociferation, as to draw from the minister of a neighbouring kirk, the testy exclamation, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon, as where that child is."

On his removal to Edinburgh, in his eighth year, he was subjected to different influences. His worthy father was a severe martinet in all the forms of his profession, and it may be added, indeed, of his religion, which he contrived to make somewhat burdensome to his more volatile son. The tutor was still more strict in his religious sentiments, and the lightest literary *divertissement* in which either of them indulged, was such as could be gleaned from the time-honored folios of Archbishop Spottiswoode, or worthy Robert Wodrow. Even here, however, Scott's young mind contrived to gather materials and impulses for future action. In his long arguments with Master Mitchell, he became steeped in the history of the Covenanters, and the persecuted Church of Scotland, while he was still more rooted in his own Jacobite notions, early instilled into his mind by the tales of his relatives of Sandy-Knowe, whose own family had been out in the "affair of forty-five." Amidst the professional and polemical worthies of his father's library, Scott detected a copy of Shakespeare; and he relates with what *goût* he used to creep out of his bed, where he had been safely deposited for the night, and, by the light of the fire, *in puris naturalibus*, as it were, pore over the pages of the great magician, and study those mighty spells, by which he gave to airy fantasies the forms and substance of humanity. Scott distinctly recollected the time and the spot where he first opened a volume of Percy's "Reliques of English Poetry"; a work which may have suggested to him the plan and the purpose of the "Border Minstrelsy." Every day's experience shows us how much more actively the business of education goes on out of school, than in it. And Scott's history shows equally, that genius, whatever obstacles may be thrown in

its way in one direction, will find room for its expansion in another ; as the young tree sends forth its shoots most prolific in that quarter where the sunshine is permitted to fall on it.

At the High School, in which he was placed by his father at an early period, he seems not to have been particularly distinguished in the regular course of studies. His voracious appetite for books, however, of a certain cast, as romances, chivalrous tales, and worm-eaten chronicles scarcely less chivalrous, and his wonderful memory for such reading as struck his fancy, soon made him regarded by his fellows as a phenomenon of black-letter scholarship, which, in process of time achieved for him the cognomen of that redoubtable schoolman, Duns Scotus. He now also gave evidence of his powers of creation as well as of acquisition. He became noted for his own stories, generally bordering on the marvellous, with a plentiful seasoning of knight-errantry, which suited his bold and chivalrous temper. "Slink over beside me, Jamie," he would whisper to his schoolfellow Ballantyne, "and I'll tell you a story." Jamie was, indeed, destined to sit beside him during the greater part of his life.

The same tastes and talents continued to display themselves more strongly with increasing years. Having beaten pretty thoroughly the ground of romantic and legendary lore, at least so far as the English libraries, to which he had access, would permit, he next endeavoured, while at the University, to which he had been transferred from the High School, to pursue the same subject in the Continental languages. Many were the strolls which he took in the neighbourhood, especially to Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crag, where, perched on some almost inaccessible eyrie, he might be seen conning over his Ariosto or Cervantes, or some other bard of romance, with some favorite companion of his studies, or pouring into the ears of the latter his own boyish legends, glowing with

" achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry."

A critical knowledge of these languages he seems not to have obtained ; and, even in the French, made but an indifferent figure in conversation. An accurate acquaintance with the pronunciation and prosody of a foreign tongue, is undoubtedly a desirable accomplishment. But it is, after all, a mere accomplishment, subordinate to the great purposes for which a language is to be learned. Scott did not, as is too often the

case, mistake the shell for the kernel. He looked on language only as the key to unlock the foreign stores of wisdom, the pearls of inestimable price, wherever found, with which to enrich his native literature.

After a brief residence at the University, he was regularly indented as an apprentice to his father, in 1786. One can hardly imagine a situation less congenial with the ardent, effervescing spirit of a poetic fancy ; fettered down to a daily routine of drudgery, scarcely above that of a mere scrivener. It proved a useful school of discipline to him, however. It formed early habits of method, punctuality, and laborious industry ; business habits, in short, most adverse to the poetic temperament, but indispensable to the accomplishment of the gigantic tasks which he afterwards assumed. He has himself borne testimony to his general diligence in his new vocation, and tells us, that on one occasion he transcribed no less than a hundred and twenty folio pages at a sitting.

In the midst of these mechanical duties, however, he did not lose sight of the favorite objects of his study and meditation. He made frequent excursions into the Lowland as well as Highland districts, in search of traditionary relics. These pilgrimages he frequently performed on foot. His constitution, now become hardy by severe training, made him careless of exposure, and his frank and warm-hearted manners, — eminently favorable to his purposes, by thawing at once any feelings of frosty reserve, which might have encountered a stranger, — made him equally welcome at the staid and decorous manse, and at the rough but hospitable board of the peasant. Here was indeed the study of the future novelist ; the very school in which to meditate those models of character and situation, which he was afterwards, long afterwards, to transfer, in such living colors, to the canvass. “ He was makin’ himsell a’ the time,” says one of his companions, “ but he didna ken, may be, what he was about, till years had past. At first he thought o’ little, I dare say, but the queer-ness and the fun.” The honest Writer to the Signet does not seem to have thought it either so funny or so profitable ; for on his son’s return from one of these *raids*, as he styled them, the old gentleman peevishly inquired how he had been living, so long. “ Pretty much like the young ravens,” answered Walter ; “ I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in the Vicar of

Wakefield. If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage over the world." "I doubt," said the grave Clerk to the Signet, "I greatly doubt, Sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape-gut*!" Perhaps even the revelation, could it have been made to him, of his son's future literary glory, would scarcely have satisfied the worthy father, who, probably, would have regarded a seat on the bench of the Court of Sessions as much higher glory. At all events, this was not far from the judgment of Dominie Mitchell, who, in his notice of his illustrious pupil, "sincerely regrets, that Sir Walter's precious time was so much devoted to the *dulce* rather than the *utile* of composition, and that his great talents should have been wasted on such subjects!"

It is impossible to glance at Scott's early life, without perceiving how powerfully all its circumstances, whether accidental or contrived, conspired to train him for the peculiar position he was destined to occupy in the world of letters. There never was a character, in whose infant germ, as it were, the mature and fully developed lineaments might be more distinctly traced. What he was in his riper age, so he was in his boyhood. We discern the same tastes, the same peculiar talents, the same social temper and affections, and, in a great degree, the same habits, — in their embryo state, of course, but distinctly marked; — and his biographer has shown no little skill in enabling us to trace their gradual, progressive expansion, from the hour of his birth up to the full prime and maturity of manhood.

In 1792, Scott, whose original destination of a Writer had been changed to that of an Advocate, — from his father's conviction, as it would seem, of the superiority of his talents to the former station, — was admitted to the Scottish bar. Here he continued in assiduous attendance during the regular terms, but more noted for his stories in the Outer House, than his arguments in Court. It may appear singular, that a person so gifted, both as a writer and as a *raconteur*, should have had no greater success in his profession. But the case is not uncommon. Indeed, experience shows, that the most eminent writers have not made the most successful speakers. It is not more strange, than that a good writer of novels should not excel as a dramatic author. Perhaps a consideration of the subject would lead us to refer the phenomena in both

cases to the same principle. At all events, Scott was an exemplification of both ; and we leave the solution to those who have more leisure and ingenuity to unravel the mystery.

Scott's leisure, in the mean time, was well employed in storing his mind with German romance, with whose wild fictions, intrenching on the grotesque, indeed, he found at that time more sympathy than in later life. In 1796 he first appeared before the public as a translator of Bürger's well known ballads, thrown off by him at a heat, and which found favor with the few into whose hands they passed. He subsequently adventured in Monk Lewis's crazy bark, — "*Tales of Wonder*," — which soon went to pieces, leaving, however, among its surviving fragments the scattered contributions of Scott.

At last, in 1802, he gave to the world his two first volumes of the "*Border Minstrelsy*," printed by his old schoolfellow, Ballantyne, and which, by the beauty of the typography, as well as literary execution, made a sort of epoch in Scottish literary history. There was no work of Scott's after life, which showed the result of so much preliminary labor. Before ten years old, he had collected several volumes of ballads and traditions, and we have seen how diligently he pursued the same vocation in later years. The publication was admitted to be far more faithful, as well as skilfully collated, than its prototype, the "*Reliques*" of Bishop Percy ; while his notes contained a mass of antiquarian information relative to border life, conveyed in a style of beauty unprecedented in topics of this kind, and enlivened with a higher interest than poetic fiction. Percy's "*Reliques*" had prepared the way for the kind reception of the "*Minstrelsy*," by the general relish, — notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's protest, — it had created for the simple pictures of a pastoral and heroic time. Burns had since familiarized the English ear with the Doric melodies of his native land ; and now a greater than Burns appeared, whose first production, by a singular chance, came into the world in the very year in which the Ayrshire minstrel was withdrawn from it, as if Nature had intended that the chain of poetic inspiration should not be broken. The delight of the public was further augmented on the appearance of the third volume of the "*Minstrelsy*," containing various imitations of the old ballad, which displayed all the rich fashion of the antique, purified from the mould and rust by which the beauties of such weather-beaten trophies are defaced.

The first edition of the "Minstrelsy," consisting of eight hundred copies, went off, as Lockhart tells us, in less than a year; and the poet, on the publication of a second, received five hundred pounds sterling from Longman, — an enormous price for such a commodity, but the best bargain, probably, that the bookseller ever made, as the subsequent sale has since extended to twenty thousand copies.

Scott was not in great haste to follow up his success. It was three years later, before he took the field as an independent author, in a poem which at once placed him among the great original writers of his country. The "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*," a complete expansion of the ancient ballad into an epic form, was published in 1805. It was opening a new creation in the realm of fancy. It seemed as if the author had transfused into his page the strong delineations of the Homeric pencil, the rude, but generous gallantry of a primitive period, softened by the more airy and magical inventions of Italian romance,* and conveyed in tones of natural melody, such as had not been heard since the strains of Burns. The book speedily found that unprecedented circulation, which all his subsequent compositions attained. Other writers had addressed themselves to a more peculiar and limited feeling; to a narrower, and generally a more select, audience. But Scott was found to combine all the qualities of interest for every order. He drew from the pure springs, which gush forth in every heart. His narrative chained every reader's attention by the stirring variety of its incidents, while the fine touches of sentiment with which it abounded, like wild flowers, springing up spontaneously around, were full of freshness and beauty, that made one wonder others should not have stooped to gather them before.

The success of the "*Lay*" determined the course of its author's future life. Notwithstanding his punctual attention to

* "*Mettendo lo Turpin, lo metto anch' io,*"

says Ariosto, playfully, when he tells a particularly tough story.

"I cannot tell how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 't was said to me,"

says the author of the "*Lay*," on a similar occasion. The resemblance might be traced much farther than mere forms of expression, to the Italian, who, like

"the Ariosto of the North,
Sung ladye-love, and war, romance, and knightly worth."

his profession, his utmost profits for any one year of the ten he had been in practice had not exceeded two hundred and thirty pounds ; and of late they had sensibly declined. Latterly, indeed, he had coquetted somewhat too openly with the Muse for his professional reputation. Themis has always been found a stern and jealous mistress, chary of dispensing her golden favors to those who are seduced into a flirtation with her more volatile sister.

Scott, however, soon found himself in a situation that made him independent of her favors. His income from the two offices to which he was promoted, of Sheriff of Selkirk, and Clerk of the Court of Sessions, was so ample, combined with what fell to him by inheritance and marriage, that he was left at liberty freely to consult his own tastes. Amid the seductions of poetry, however, he never shrunk from his burdensome professional duties ; and he submitted to all their drudgery with unflinching constancy, when the labors of his pen made the emoluments almost beneath consideration. He never relished the idea of being divorced from active life by the solitary occupations of a recluse. And his official functions, however severely they taxed his time, may be said to have, in some degree, compensated him by the new scenes of life which they were constantly disclosing, — the very materials of those fictions, on which his fame and his fortune were to be built.

Scott's situation was, on the whole, eminently propitious to literary pursuits. He was married, and passed the better portion of the year in the country, where the quiet pleasures of his fireside circle, and a keen relish for rural sports, relieved his mind and invigorated both health and spirits. In early life, it seems, he had been crossed in love ; and, like Dante and Byron, to whom in this respect he is often compared, he has more than once, according to his biographer, shadowed forth in his verses the object of his unfortunate passion. He does not appear to have taken it so seriously, however, nor to have shown the morbid sensibility in relation to it, discovered by both Byron and Dante, the former of whom perhaps found his *cara sposa* so much too cold, as the latter certainly did his too hot, for his own temperament, as to seek relief from the present in the poetical visions of the past.

Scott's next great poem was his "Marmion," transcending,

in the judgment of many, all his other epics, and containing, in the judgment of all, passages of poetic fire, which he never equalled ; but which, nevertheless, was greeted on its entrance into the world, by a critique in the leading journal of the day, of the most caustic and unfriendly temper. The journal was the *Edinburgh*, to which he had been a frequent contributor, and the reviewer was his intimate friend, Jeffrey. The unkindest cut in the article was, the imputation of a neglect of Scottish character and feeling. "There is scarcely one trait of true Scottish nationality or patriotism introduced into the whole Poem ; and Mr. Scott's only expression of admiration for the beautiful country to which he belongs, is put, if we rightly remember, into the mouth of one of his Southern favorites." This of Walter Scott ! The critic had some misgivings, it would seem, as to the propriety of the part he was playing, or at least as to its effect on the mind of his friend ; since he sent a copy of the yet unpublished article to the latter on the day he was engaged to dine with him, with a request for a speedy answer. Scott testified no visible marks of vexation, although his wife was not so discreet, telling Jeffrey, rather bluntly, she hoped Constable would pay him well for abusing his friend. The gossips of the day in *Edinburgh* exaggerated the story into her actually turning the reviewer out of doors. He well deserved it.

The affair, however, led to important consequences. Scott was not slow, after this, in finding the political principles of the *Edinburgh* so repugnant to his own, (and they certainly were as opposite as the poles,) that he first dropped the journal, and next labored with unwearied diligence to organize another, whose main purpose should be to counteract the heresies of the former. This was the origin of the *London Quarterly*, more imputable to Scott's exertions, than to those of any, indeed all, other persons. The result has been, doubtless, highly serviceable to the interests of both morals and letters. Not that the new *Review* was conducted with more fairness, or, in this sense, *principle*, than its antagonist. A remark of Scott's own, in a letter to Ellis, shows with how much principle. "I have run up an attempt on 'The Curse of Kehama' for the *Quarterly*. It affords cruel openings to the quizzers, and, I suppose, will get it roundly in the *Edinburgh Review*. I would have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*." But, although the fate

of the individual was thus, to a certain extent, a matter of caprice, or rather prejudice in the critic, yet the great abstract questions in morals, politics, and literature, by being discussed on both sides, were presented in a fuller, and of course fairer, light to the public. Another beneficial result to letters was, — and we shall gain credit, at least, for candor, in confessing it, — that it broke down somewhat of that divinity, which hedged in the despotic *we* of the reviewer, so long as no rival arose to contest the sceptre. The claims to infallibility, so long and slavishly acquiesced in, fell to the ground, when thus stoutly asserted by conflicting parties. It was pretty clear, that the same thing could not be all black and all white, at the same time. In short, it was the old story of pope and antipope; and the public began to find out, that there might be hopes for the salvation of an author, though damned by the literary popedom. Time, indeed, by reversing many of its decisions, must at length have shown the same thing.

But to return. Scott showed how nearly he had been touched to the quick, by two other acts not so discreet. These were, the establishment of an Annual Register, and of the great publishing house of the Ballantynes, in which he became a silent partner. The last step involved him in grievous embarrassments, and stimulated him to exertions, which required “a frame of adamant and soul of fire” to have endured. At the same time, we find him overwhelmed with poetical, biographical, historical, and critical compositions, together with editorial labors of appalling magnitude. In this multiplication of himself in a thousand forms, we see him always the same, vigorous and effective. “Poetry,” he says, in one of his letters, “is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful to those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow.” It might be regretted, however, that he should have wasted powers fitted for so much higher culture, on the coarse products of a kitchen-garden, which might have been safely trusted to inferior hands.

In 1811, Scott gave to the world his exquisite poem, “The Lady of the Lake.” One of his fair friends had remonstrated with him on thus risking again the laurel he had already won. He replied, with characteristic, and indeed

prophetic, spirit, "If I fail, *I will write prose all my life.*
But if I succeed,

'Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather an a'!'

In his eulogy on Byron, Scott remarks, "There has been no reposing under the shade of his laurels, no living upon the resource of past reputation; none of that *coddling* and petty precaution, which little authors call 'taking care of their fame.' Byron let his fame take care of itself." Scott could not have more accurately described his own character.

The "*Lady of the Lake*" was welcomed with an enthusiasm, surpassing that which attended any other of his poems. It seemed like the sweet breathings of his native pibroch, stealing over glen and mountain, and calling up all the delicious associations of rural solitude, which beautifully contrasted with the din of battle and the shrill cry of the war-trumpet, that stirred the soul in every page of his "*Marmion*." The publication of this work carried his fame as a poet to its most brilliant height. Its popularity may be inferred from the fact, stated by Lockhart, that the post-horse duty rose to an extraordinary degree in Scotland, from the eagerness of travelers to visit the localities of the poem. A more substantial evidence was afforded in its amazing circulation, and consequently its profits. The press could scarcely keep pace with the public demand, and no less than fifty thousand copies of it have been sold since the date of its appearance. The successful author realized more than two thousand guineas from his production. Milton received ten pounds for the two editions which he lived to see of his "*Paradise Lost*." The Ayrshire bard had sighed for "a lass wi' a tocker." Scott had now found one in the Muse, such as no Scottish, nor any other poet had ever found before.

While the poetical fame of Scott was thus at its zenith, a new star rose above the horizon, whose eccentric course and dazzling radiance completely bewildered the spectator. In 1812, "*Childe Harold*" appeared, and the attention seemed to be now called, for the first time, from the outward form of man and visible nature, to the secret depths of the soul. The darkest recesses of human passion were laid open, and the note of sorrow was prolonged in tones of agonized sensibility, the more touching as coming from one who was placed on those dazzling heights of rank and fashion, which, to the vulgar

eye at least, seem to lie in unclouded sunshine. Those of the present generation who have heard only the same key thrummed *ad nauseam* by the feeble imitators of his Lordship, can form no idea of the effect produced when the chords were first swept by the master's fingers. It was found impossible for the ear once attuned to strains of such compass and ravishing harmony, to return with the same relish to purer, it might be, but tamer melody; and the sweet voice of the Scottish minstrel lost much of its power to charm, let him charm never so wisely. While "Rokeby" was in preparation, bets were laid on the rival candidates by the wits of the day. The sale of this poem, though great, showed a sensible decline in the popularity of its author. This became still more evident on the publication of "The Lord of the Isles"; and Scott admitted the conviction with his characteristic spirit and good-nature. "'Well, James,' (he said to his printer,) 'I have given you a week, — what are people saying about the Lord of the Isles?' I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. 'Come,' he said, 'speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But, I see how it is, the result is given in one word, — *Disappointment*.' My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth he had been wholly unprepared for the event. — At length he said, with perfect cheerfulness, 'Well, well, James, so be it, — but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must stick to something else.' " This *something else* was a mine he had already hit upon, of invention and substantial wealth, such as Thomas the Rhymer, or Michael Scott, or any other adept in the black art, had never dreamed of.

Everybody knows the story of the composition of "Waverley," — the most interesting story in the annals of letters, — and how, some ten years after its commencement, it was fished out of some old lumber in an attic, and completed in a few weeks for the press, in 1814. Its appearance marks a more distinct epoch in English literature than that of the poetry of its author. All previous attempts in the same school of fiction, — a school of English growth, — had been cramped by the limited information or talent of the writers. Smollett

had produced his spirited sea-pieces, and Fielding his warm sketches of country life, both of them mixed up with so much Billingsgate, as required a strong flavor of wit to make them tolerable. Richardson had covered acres of canvass with his faithful family pictures. Mrs. Radcliffe had dipped up to the elbows in horrors; while Miss Burney's fashionable gossip, and Miss Edgeworth's Hogarth drawings of the prose, — not the poetry, — of life and character, had each and all found favor in their respective ways. But a work now appeared, in which the author swept over the whole range of character with entire freedom, as well as fidelity, ennobling the whole by high historic associations, and in a style, varying with his theme, but whose pure and classic flow was tinged with just so much of poetic coloring, as suited the purposes of romance. It was Shakspeare in prose.

The work was published, as we know, anonymously. Mr. Gillies states, however, that while in the press, fragments of it were communicated to "Mr. Mackenzie, Dr. Brown, Mrs. Hamilton, and other *savans* or *savantes*, whose dicta on the merits of a new novel were considered unimpeachable." By their approbation "a strong body of friends was formed, and the curiosity of the public prepared the way for its reception." This may explain the rapidity with which the anonymous publication rose into a degree of favor, which, though not less surely perhaps, it might have been more slow in achieving. The author jealously preserved his incognito, and, in order to heighten the mystification, flung off almost simultaneously a variety of works, in prose and poetry, any one of which might have been the labor of months. The public for a moment was at fault. There seemed to be six Richmonds in the field. The world, therefore, was reduced to the dilemma, of either supposing that half a dozen different hands could work in precisely the same style, or that one could do the work of half a dozen. With time, however, the veil wore thinner and thinner, until at length, and long before the ingenious argument of Mr. Adolphus, there was scarcely a critic so purblind as not to discern behind it the features of the mighty Minstrel.

Constable had offered seven hundred pounds for the new novel. "It was," says Mr. Lockhart, "ten times as much as Miss Edgeworth ever realized from any of her popular Irish tales." Scott declined the offer, which had been a good one for the bookseller had he made it as many thousand. But it passed the art of necromancy to divine this.

Scott, once entered on this new career, followed it up with an energy unrivalled in the history of literature. The public mind was not suffered to cool for a moment, before its attention was called to another miracle of creation from the same hand. Even illness that would have broken the spirit of most men, as it prostrated the physical energies of Scott, opposed no impediment to the march of composition. When he could no longer write, he could dictate ; and in this way, amid the agonies of a racking disease, he composed "The Bride of Lammermoor," the "Legend of Montrose," and a great part of "Ivanhoe." The first, indeed, is darkened with those deep shadows that might seem thrown over it by the sombre condition of its author. But what shall we say of the imperturbable dry humor of the gallant Captain Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, or of the gorgeous revelries of Ivanhoe, —

"Such sights as youthful poets dream,
On summer eves by haunted stream," —

what shall we say of such brilliant day-dreams for a bed of torture ? Never before had the spirit triumphed over such agonies of the flesh. "The best way," said Scott, in one of his talks with Gillies, "is, *if possible*, to triumph over disease by setting it at defiance, somewhat on the same principle as one avoids being stung by boldly grasping a nettle."

The prose fictions were addressed to a much larger audience than the poems could be. They had attractions for every age and every class. The profits, of course, were commensurate. Arithmetic has never been so severely taxed, as in the computation of Scott's productions, and the proceeds resulting from them. In one year he received (or, more properly, was credited with, — for it is somewhat doubtful how much he actually received) fifteen thousand pounds for his novels, comprehending the first edition and the copyright. The discovery of this rich mine furnished its fortunate proprietor with the means of gratifying the fondest, and, indeed, most chimerical, desires. He had always coveted the situation of a lord of acres, — a Scottish laird ; where his passion for planting might find scope in the creation of whole forests, — for every thing with him was on a magnificent scale, — and where he might indulge the kindly feelings of his nature in his benevolent offices to a numerous and dependent tenantry. The few acres of the original purchase now swelled into hundreds, and, for aught we know, thousands ; for one tract alone

we find incidentally noticed as costing thirty thousand pounds. "It rounds off the property so handsomely," he says, in one of his letters. There was always a corner to "round off." The mansion, in the mean time, from a simple cottage *ornée*, was amplified into the dimensions almost, as well as the bizarre proportions, of some old feudal castle. The furniture and decorations were of the costliest kind; the wainscots of oak and cedar, the floors tessellated with marbles, or woods of different dyes, the ceilings fretted and carved with all the delicate tracery of a Gothic abbey, the storied windows blazoned with the richly colored insignia of heraldry, the walls garnished with time-honored trophies, or curious specimens of art, or volumes sumptuously bound,—in short, with all that luxury could demand, or ingenuity devise; while a copious reservoir of gas supplied every corner of the mansion with such fountains of light, as must have puzzled the genius of the *lamp* to provide for the less fortunate Aladdin.

Scott's exchequer must have been seriously taxed in another form, by the crowds of visitors whom he entertained under his hospitable roof. There was scarcely a person of note, or, indeed, not of note, who visited that country without paying his respects to the Lion of Scotland. Lockhart reckons up a full sixth of the British peerage, who had been there within his recollection; and Captain Hall, in his amusing Notes, remarks, that it was not unusual for a dozen or more coach loads to find their way into his grounds in the course of the day, most of whom found, or forced, an entrance into the mansion. Such was the heavy tax paid by his celebrity, and we may add, his good-nature. For if the one had been a whit less than the other, he could never have tolerated such a nuisance.

The cost of his correspondence gives one no light idea of the demands made on his time, as well as purse, in another form. His postage for letters, independently of franks, by which a large portion of it was covered, amounted to a hundred and fifty pounds, it seems, in the course of the year. In this, indeed, should be included ten pounds for a pair of unfortunate *Cherokee Lovers*, sent all the way from our own happy land, in order to be god-fathered by Sir Walter on the London boards. Perhaps the smart-money he had to pay on this interesting occasion, had its influence in mixing up rather more acid than was natural to him, in his judgments

of our countrymen. At all events, the Yankees find little favor on the few occasions on which he has glanced at them in his correspondence. "I am not at all surprised," he says, in a letter to Miss Edgeworth, apparently chiming in with her own tune, "I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honorable love of their country, and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling." On another occasion, he does, indeed, admit having met with, in the course of his life, "four or five well-lettered Americans, ardent in pursuit of knowledge, and free from the ignorance and forward presumption, which distinguish many of their countrymen." This seems hard measure; but perhaps we should find it difficult, among the many who have visited this country, to recollect as great a number of Englishmen, — and Scotchmen to boot, — entitled to a higher degree of commendation. It can hardly be, that the well-informed and well-bred men of both countries make a point of staying at home; so we suppose we must look for the solution of the matter in the existence of some disagreeable ingredient, common to the characters of both nations, sprouting as they do from a common stock, which remains latent at home, and is never fully disclosed till they get into a foreign climate. But as this problem seems pregnant with philosophical, physiological, and, for aught we know, psychological matter, we have not courage for it here, but recommend the solution to Miss Martineau, to whom it will afford a very good title for a new chapter in her next edition. The strictures we have quoted, however, to speak more seriously, are worth attend-

ing to, coming as they do from a shrewd observer, and one whose judgments, though here somewhat colored, no doubt, by political prejudice, are, in the main, distinguished by a sound and liberal philanthropy. But were he ten times an enemy, we would say, "*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*"

With the splendid picture of the baronial residence at Abbotsford, Mr. Lockhart closes all that at this present writing we have received of his delightful work in this country. And in the last sentence, the melancholy sound of "the muffled drum," gives ominous warning of what we are to expect in the sixth and concluding volume. In the dearth of more authentic information, we will piece out our sketch with a few facts gleaned from the somewhat meagre bill of fare, — meagre by comparison with the rich banquet of the true *Amphitryon*, — afforded by the "*Recollections*" of Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies.

The unbounded popularity of the *Waverley* novels led to still more extravagant anticipations on the part both of the publishers and author. Some hints of a falling off, though but slightly, in the public favor, were unheeded by both parties ; though, to say truth, the exact state of things was never disclosed to Scott, it being Ballantyne's notion, that it would prove a damper, and that the true course was, "to press on more sail as the wind lulled." In these sanguine calculations, not only enormous sums, or, to speak correctly, *bills*, were given for what had been written, but the author's drafts, to the amount of many thousand pounds, were accepted by Constable in favor of works, the very embryos of which lay, not only unformed, but unimagined, in the womb of time. In return for this singular accommodation, Scott was induced to indorse the drafts of his publisher ; and in this way an amount of liabilities was incurred, which, considering the character of the house, and its transactions, it is altogether inexplicable, that a person in the independent position of Sir Walter Scott, should have subjected himself to for a moment. He seems to have had entire confidence in the stability of the firm ; a confidence, to which it seems, from Mr. Gillies's account, not to have been entitled, from the first moment of his connexion with it. The great reputation of the house, however, the success and magnitude of some of its transactions, especially the publication of these novels, gave it a large credit, which enabled it to go forward

with a great show of prosperity, in ordinary times, and veiled the tottering state of things, probably, from Constable's own eyes. It is but the tale of yesterday. The case of Constable & Co., is, unhappily, a very familiar one to us. But when the hurricane of 1825 came on, it swept away all those buildings that were not founded on a rock; and those of Messrs. Constable, among others, soon became literally mere *castles in the air*. In plain English, the firm stopped payment. The assets were very trifling in comparison with the debts. And Sir Walter Scott was found on their paper to the frightful amount of one hundred thousand pounds!

His conduct on the occasion was precisely what was to have been anticipated from one who had declared on a similar, though much less appalling conjuncture, "I am always ready to make any sacrifices to do justice to my engagements, and would rather sell any thing, or every thing, than be less than a true man to the world." He put up his house and furniture in town at auction; delivered over his personal effects at Abbotsford, his plate, books, furniture, &c., to be held in trust for his creditors (the estate itself had been recently secured to his son, on occasion of his marriage); and bound himself to discharge a certain amount annually of the liabilities of the insolvent firm. He then, with his characteristic energy, set about the performance of his Herculean task. He took lodgings in a third-rate house in St. David's Street; saw but little company; abridged the hours usually devoted to his meals and his family; gave up his ordinary exercise; and, in short, adopted the severe habits of a regular Grub Street stipendiary.

"For many years," he said to Mr. Gillies, "I have been accustomed to hard work, because I found it a pleasure; now, with all due respect for Falstaff's principle, 'nothing on compulsion,' I certainly will not shrink from work because it has become necessary."

One of his first tasks was his "*Life of Bonaparte*," achieved in the space of thirteen months. For this he received fourteen thousand pounds, about eleven hundred per month; not a bad bargain, either, as it proved, for the publishers. The two first volumes of the nine which make up the English edition, were a *rifacimento* of what he had before compiled for the "*Annual Register*." With every allowance for the inaccuracies, and the excessive expansion incident to such

a flashing rapidity of execution, the work, taking into view the broad range of its topics, its shrewd and sagacious reflections, and the free, bold, and picturesque coloring of its narration,—and, above all, considering *the brief time in which it was written*, — is indisputably one of the most remarkable monuments of genius and industry, — perhaps the most remarkable, ever recorded.

Scott's celebrity made every thing that fell from him, however trifling, — the dew-drops from the lion's mane, — of value. But none of the many adventures he embarked in, or rather set afloat, proved so profitable as the republication of his novels, with his notes and illustrations. As he felt his own strength in the increasing success of his labors, he appears to have relaxed somewhat from them, and to have again resumed somewhat of his ancient habits, and, in a mitigated degree, his ancient hospitality. But still his exertions were too severe, and pressed heavily on the springs of health, already deprived by age of their former elasticity and vigor. At length, in 1831, he was overtaken by one of those terrible shocks of paralysis, which seem to have been constitutional in his family, but which, with more precaution, and under happier auspices, might, doubtless, have been postponed, if not wholly averted. At this time he had, in the short space of little more than five years, by his sacrifices and efforts, discharged about two thirds of the debt for which he was responsible; an astounding result, wholly unparalleled in the history of letters! There is something inexpressibly painful in this spectacle of a generous heart thus courageously contending with fortune, bearing up against the tide with unconquerable spirit, and finally overwhelmed by it, just within reach of shore.

The rest of his story is one of humiliation and sorrow. He was induced to make a voyage to the Continent, to try the effect of a more genial climate. Under the sunny sky of Italy, he seemed to gather new strength for a while. But his eye fell with indifference on the venerable monuments, which, in better days, would have kindled all his enthusiasm. The invalid sighed for his own home at Abbotsford. The heat of the weather, and the fatigue of rapid travel, brought on another shock, which reduced him to a state of deplorable imbecility. In this condition, he returned to his own halls, where the sight of early friends, and of the beautiful scenery,

the creation, as it were, of his own hands, seemed to impart a gleam of melancholy satisfaction, which soon, however, sunk into insensibility. To his present situation might well be applied the exquisite verses which he indited on another melancholy occasion ;

“ Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore ;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o’er the hills of Ettrick’s shore.

“ With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed’s silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.

“ The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree, —
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me ? ”

Providence, in its mercy, did not suffer the shattered frame long to outlive the glorious spirit which had informed it. He breathed his last, on the 21st of September, 1832. His remains were deposited, as he had always desired, in the hoary abbey of Dryburgh ; and the pilgrim, from many a distant clime, shall repair to the consecrated spot, so long as the reverence for exalted genius and worth shall survive in the human heart.

This sketch, brief as we could make it, of the literary history of Sir Walter Scott, has extended so far as to leave but little space for — what Lockhart’s volumes afford ample materials for — his personal character. Take it for all and all, it is not too much to say, that this character is probably the most remarkable on record. There is no man, that we now recall, of historical celebrity, who combined, in so eminent a degree, the highest qualities of the moral, the intellectual, and the physical. He united in his own character, what hitherto had been found incompatible. Though a poet, and living in an ideal world, he was an exact, methodical man of business ; though achieving with the most wonderful fertility of genius, he was patient and laborious ; a mousing antiquarian, yet with the most active interest in the present, and whatever was going on around him ; with a strong turn for a roving life, and military adventure, he was yet chained to

his desk more hours, at some periods of his life, than a monkish recluse ; a man with a heart as capacious as his head ; a Tory, brim full of Jacobitism, yet full of sympathy and unaffected familiarity with all classes, even the humblest ; a successful author, without pedantry, and without conceit ; one, indeed, at the head of the republic of letters, and yet with a lower estimate of letters, as compared with other intellectual pursuits, than was ever hazarded before.

The first quality of his character, or rather that which forms the basis of it, as of all great characters, was his energy. We see it, in his early youth, triumphing over the impediments of nature, and in spite of lameness, making him conspicuous in every sort of athletic exercise, — clambering up dizzy precipices, wading through treacherous fords, and performing feats of pedestrianism, that make one's joints ache to read of. As he advanced in life, we see the same force of purpose turned to higher objects. A striking example occurs in his organization of the journals and the publishing house in opposition to Constable. In what Herculean drudgery did not this latter business, in which he undertook to supply matter for the nimble press of Ballantyne, involve him ! While, in addition to his own concerns, he had to drag along, by his solitary momentum, a score of heavier undertakings, that led Lockhart to compare him to a steam-engine, with a train of coal-wagons hitched on to it. "Yes," said Scott, laughing, and making a crashing cut with his axe, (for they were felling larches,) "and there was a cursed lot of dung-carts too."

We see the same powerful energies triumphing over disease, at a later period, when, indeed, nothing but a resolution to get the better of it enabled him to do so. "Be assured," he remarked to Mr. Gillies, "that if pain could have prevented my application to literary labor, not a page of *Ivanhoe* would have been written. Now if I had given way to mere feelings, and ceased to work, it is a question whether the disorder might not have taken a deeper root, and become incurable." But the most extraordinary instance of this trait, is the readiness with which he assumed, and the spirit with which he carried through, till his mental strength broke down under it, the gigantic task imposed on him by the failure of Constable.

It mattered little, indeed, what the nature of the task was,

whether it were organizing an opposition to a political faction, or a troop of cavalry to resist invasion, or a medley of wild Highlanders and Edinburgh cockneys to make up a royal puppet-show, — a loyal celebration, — for “His Most Sacred Majesty,” — he was the master-spirit that gave the cue to the whole *dramatis personæ*. This potent impulse showed itself in the thoroughness with which he prescribed, not merely the general orders, but the execution of the minutest details, in his own person. Thus all around him was the creation, as it were, of his individual exertion. His lands waved with forests, planted with his own hands, and, in process of time, cleared by his own hands. He did not lay the stones in mortar, exactly, for his whimsical castle ; but he seems to have superintended the operation, from the foundation to the battlements. The antique relics, the curious works of art, the hangings and furniture, even, with which his halls were decorated, were specially contrived or selected by him ; and, to read his letters at this time to his friend Terry, one might fancy himself perusing the correspondence of an upholsterer, so exact and technical is he in his instructions. We say this not in disparagement of his great qualities. It is only the more extraordinary ; for, while he stooped to such trifles, he was equally thorough in matters of the highest moment. It was a trait of character.

Another quality, which, like the last, seems to have given the tone to his character, was his social or benevolent feelings. His heart was an unfailing fountain, which not merely the distresses, but the joys, of his fellow creatures made to flow like water. In early life, and possibly sometimes in later, high spirits, and a vigorous constitution, led him occasionally to carry his social propensities into convivial excess. But he never was in danger of the habitual excess to which a vulgar mind, — and sometimes, alas ! one more finely tuned, — abandons itself. Indeed, with all his conviviality, it was not the sensual relish, but the social, which acted on him. He was neither *gourmé* nor *gourmand* ; but his social meetings were endeared to him by the free interchange of kindly feelings with his friends. La Bruyère says, (and it is odd he should have found it out in Louis the Fourteenth’s court,) “the heart has more to do than the head with the pleasures, or rather promoting the pleasures, of society” ; “Un homme est d’un meilleur commerce dans la société par le cœur que

par l'esprit." If report, the report of travellers, be true, we Americans, at least the New-Englanders, are too much perplexed with the cares and crosses of life, to afford many genuine specimens of this *bonhomme*. However this may be, we all, doubtless, know some such character, whose shining face, the index of a cordial heart, radiant with beneficent pleasure, diffuses its own exhilarating glow wherever it appears. Rarely, indeed, is this precious quality found united with the most exalted intellect. Whether it be that Nature, chary of her gifts, does not care to shower too many of them on one head ; or, that the public admiration has led the man of intellect to set too high a value on himself, or at least his own pursuits, to take an interest in the inferior concerns of others ; or, that the fear of compromising his dignity puts him "on points" with those who approach him ; or, whether, in truth, the very magnitude of his own reputation, throws a freezing shadow over us little people in his neighbourhood ; — whatever be the cause, it is too true, that the highest powers of mind are very often deficient in the only one which can make the rest of much worth in society, — the power of pleasing.

Scott was not one of these little great. His was not one of those dark-lantern visages, which concentrate all their light on their own path, and are black as midnight to all about them. He had a ready sympathy, a word of contagious kindness, or cordial greeting, for all. His manners, too, were of a kind to dispel the icy reserve and awe, which his great name was calculated to inspire. His frank address, was a sort of *open sesame* to every heart. He did not deal in sneers, the poisoned weapons, which come not from the head, as the man who launches them is apt to think, but from an acid heart, or perhaps an acid stomach, a very common laboratory of such small artillery. Neither did Scott amuse the company with parliamentary harangues, or metaphysical disquisitions. His conversation was of the narrative kind, not formal, but as casually suggested by some passing circumstance or topic, and thrown in by way of illustration. He did not repeat himself, however, but continued to give his anecdotes such variations, by rigging them out in a new "cocked hat and walking-cane," as he called it, that they never tired like the thrice-told tale of a chronic *raconteur*. He allowed others, too, to take their turn, and thought with the Dean of St. Patrick's ;

“Carve to all, but just enough,
Let them neither starve nor stuff;
And that you may have your due,
Let your neighbours carve for you.”

He relished a good joke, from whatever quarter it came, and was not over-dainty in his manner of testifying his satisfaction. “In the full tide of mirth, he did indeed laugh the heart’s laugh,” says Mr. Adolphus. “Give me an honest laugh,” said Scott himself, on another occasion, when a buckram man of fashion had been paying him a visit at Abbotsford. His manners, free from affectation or artifice of any sort, exhibited the spontaneous movements of a kind disposition, subject to those rules of good-breeding, which Nature herself might have dictated. In this way he answered his own purposes admirably, as a painter of character, by putting every man in good humor with himself; in the same manner as a cunning portrait-painter amuses his sitters with such store of fun and anecdote, as may throw them off their guard, and call out the happiest expressions of their countenances.

Scott, in his wide range of friends and companions, does not seem to have been over-fastidious. In the instance of John Ballantyne, it has exposed him to some censure. Indeed, a more worthless fellow never hung on the skirts of a great man; for he did not take the trouble to throw a decent veil over the grossest excesses. But then, he had been the school-boy friend of Scott; had grown up with him in a sort of dependence; a relation which begets a kindly feeling, in the party that confers the benefits, at least. How strong it was in him, may be inferred from his remark at his funeral. “I feel,” said Scott, mournfully, as the solemnity was concluded, “I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me, from this day forth.” It must be admitted, however, that his intimacy with little *Rigdumfunnidos*, whatever apology it may find in Scott’s heart, was not very creditable to his taste.

But the benevolent principle showed itself not merely in words, but in the more substantial form of actions. How many are the cases recorded of indigent merit, which he drew from obscurity, and almost warmed into life, by his own generous and most delicate patronage. Such were the cases, among others, of Leyden, Weber, Hogg. How often and how cheerfully did he supply such literary contributions as

were solicited by his friends, — and they taxed him pretty liberally, — amidst all the pressure of business, and at the height of his fame, when his hours were golden hours indeed to him. In the more vulgar and easier forms of charity, he did not stint his hand, though, instead of direct assistance, he preferred to enable others to assist themselves ; in this way fortifying their good habits, and relieving them from the sense of personal degradation.

But the place where his benevolent impulses found their proper theatre for expansion, was his own home ; surrounded by a happy family, and dispensing all the hospitalities of a great feudal proprietor. “ There are many good things in life,” he says, in one of his letters, “ whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offence (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist), are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings, in which we are at once happy ourselves, and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us.” Every page of the work, almost, shows us how intimately he blended himself with the pleasures and the pursuits of his own family, watched over the education of his children, shared in their rides, their rambles, and sports, losing no opportunity of kindling in their young minds a love of virtue, and honorable principles of action. He delighted too to collect his tenantry around him, multiplying holidays, when young and old might come together under his roof-tree, when the jolly punch was liberally dispensed by himself and his wife among the elder people, and the *Hogmanay* cakes and pennies were distributed among the young ones ; while his own children mingled in the endless reels and hornpipes on the earthen floor, and the *laird* himself, mixing in the groups of merry faces, had “ his private joke for every old wife or ‘ gausie carle,’ his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees.” “ Sir Walter,” said one of his old retainers, “ speaks to every man as if he were his blood-relation.” No wonder that they should have returned this feeling with something warmer than blood-relations usually do. Mr. Gillies tells an anecdote of the Ettrick Shepherd, showing how deep a root such feelings, notwithstanding his rather odd way of expressing them, sometimes, had taken in his honest nature. “ Mr

James Ballantyne, walking home with him one evening from Scott's, where, by the by, Hogg had gone uninvited, happened to observe, 'I do not at all like this illness of Scott's. I have often seen him look jaded of late, and am afraid it is serious.' 'Haud your tongue, or I'll gar you measure your length on the pavement!' replied Hogg. 'You fause, down-hearted loon, that you are; ye daur to speak as if Scott were on his death-bed! It cannot be, it *must* not be! I will not suffer you to speak that gait.' The sentiment was like that of Uncle Toby at the bed-side of Le Fevre; and, at these words, the Shepherd's voice became suppressed with emotion."

But Scott's sympathies were not confined to his species; and if he treated them like blood-relations, he treated his brute followers like personal friends. Every one remembers old Maida, and faithful Camp, the "dear old friend," whose loss cost him a dinner. Mr. Gillies tells us, that he went into his study on one occasion, when he was winding off his "Vision of Don Roderick." "'Look here,' said the poet, 'I have just begun to copy over the rhymes that you heard to-day, and applauded so much. Return to supper, if you can; only don't be late, as you perceive we keep early hours, and Wallace will not suffer me to rest after six in the morning. Come, good dog, and help the poet.' At this hint, Wallace seated himself upright on a chair next his master, who offered him a newspaper, which he directly seized, looking very wise, and holding it firmly and contentedly in his mouth. Scott looked at him with great satisfaction, for he was excessively fond of dogs. 'Very well,' said he, '*now* we shall get on.' And so I left them abruptly, knowing that my 'absence would be the best company.' " This fellowship, indeed, extended much further than to his canine followers, of which, including hounds, terriers, mastiffs, and mongrels, he had certainly a goodly assortment. We find also, Grimalkin installed in a responsible post in the library, and out of doors pet hens, pet donkeys, and, — tell it not in Judæa, — a pet pig!

Scott's sensibilities, though easily moved, and widely diffused, were warm and sincere. None shared more cordially in the troubles of his friends; but on all such occasions, with a true manly feeling, he thought less of mere sympathy, than of the most effectual way for mitigating their sorrows. After a touching allusion, in one of his epistles, to his dear friend

Erschine's death, he concludes, "I must turn to, and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters." In another passage, which may remind one of some of the exquisite touches in Jeremy Taylor, he indulges in the following beautiful strain of philosophy. "The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy. So it must be with us

'When aince life's day draws near the gloamin',—

and yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave, where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so; otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us." His well disciplined heart seems to have confessed the influence of this philosophy, in his most ordinary relations. "I can't help it," was a favorite maxim of his, "and therefore will not think about it; for that, at least, I *can* help."

Among his admirable qualities, must not be omitted a certain worldly sagacity or shrewdness, which is expressed as strongly as any individual trait can be, in some of his portraits, especially in the excellent one of him by Leslie. Indeed, his countenance would seem to exhibit, ordinarily, much more of Dandie Dinmont's benevolent shrewdness, than of the eye glancing from earth to heaven, which in fancy we assign to the poet, and which, in some moods, must have been his. This trait may be readily discerned in all his business transactions, which he managed with perfect knowledge of character, as well as of his own rights. No one knew better than he the market value of an article; and though he underrated his literary wares, as to their mere literary rank, he set as high a money value on them, and made as sharp a bargain, as any of the *trade* could have done. In his business concerns, indeed, he managed rather too much; or, to speak more correctly, was too fond of mixing up mystery in his transactions, which, like most mysteries, proved of little service to their author. Scott's correspondence, especially with his son, affords obvious examples of shrewdness, in the advice he gives as to his deportment in the novel situations and society, into which the young cornet was thrown. Occasionally, indeed, in the cautious hints about etiquette and social observances, we are reminded of that ancient "*arbiter elegantiarum*," Lord Ches-

terfield ; though it must be confessed, there is throughout a high moral tone, which the noble lord did not very scrupulously affect.

Another feature in Scott's character was his loyalty ; which, indeed, some people would extend into a more general deference to rank not royal. We do, indeed, meet with a tone of deference, occasionally, to the privileged orders, (or rather privileged persons, as the King, his own Chief, &c., for to the mass of stars and garters he showed no such respect,) which falls rather unpleasantly on the ear of a republican. But, independently of the feelings which should rightfully have belonged to him as the subject of a monarchy, and without which he must have been a falsehearted subject, his own were heightened by a poetical coloring, that mingled, in his mind, even with much more vulgar relations of life. At the opening of the regalia in Holyrood House, when the honest burgo-master deposited the crown on the head of one of the young ladies present, the good man probably saw nothing more in the dingy diadem than we should have seen, — a head-piece for a set of men no better than himself, and, if the old adage of a "dead lion" holds true, not quite so good. But to Scott's imagination other views were unfolded. "A thousand years their cloudy wings expanded" around him, and, in the dim visions of distant times, he beheld the venerable line of monarchs, who had swayed the councils of his country in peace, and led her armies in battle. The "golden round" became in his eye the symbol of his nation's glory ; and as he heaved a heavy oath from his heart, he left the room in agitation, from which he did not speedily recover. There was not a spice of affectation in this, — for who ever accused Scott of affectation ? — but there was a good deal of poetry, the poetry of sentiment.

We have said, that this feeling mingled in the more common concerns of his life. His cranium, indeed, to judge from his busts, must have exhibited a strong developement of the organ of veneration. He regarded with reverence every thing connected with antiquity. His establishment was on the feudal scale ; his house was fashioned more after the feudal ages than his own ; and even in the ultimate distribution of his fortune, although the circumstance of having made it himself relieved him from any legal necessity of contravening the suggestions of natural justice, he showed such attachment to

the old aristocratic usage, as to settle nearly the whole of it on his eldest son.

The influence of this poetic sentiment is discernible in his most trifling acts, in his tastes, his love of the arts, his social habits. His museum, house, and grounds were adorned with relics, curious not so much from their workmanship, as their historic associations. It was the ancient fountain from Edinburgh, the Tolbooth lintels, the blunderbuss and spleughan of Rob Roy, the drinking cup of Prince Charlie, or the like. It was the same in the arts. The tunes he loved were not the refined and complex melodies of Italy, but the simple notes of his native minstrelsy, from the bagpipe of John of Skye, or from the harp of his own lovely and accomplished daughter. So also in painting. It was not the masterly designs of the great Flemish and Italian schools, that adorned his walls, but some portrait of Claverhouse, or of Queen Mary, or of "glorious old John." In architecture, we see the same spirit in the singular "romance of stone and lime," which may be said to have been his own device, down to the minutest details of its finishing. We see it again, in the joyous celebrations of his feudal tenantry, the good old festivals, the Hogmanay, the Kirn, &c., long fallen into desuetude, when the old Highland piper sounded the same wild pibroch that had so often summoned the clans together, for war or for wassail, among the fastnesses of the mountains. To the same source, in fine, may be traced the feelings of superstition, which seemed to hover round Scott's mind like some "strange, mysterious dream," giving a romantic coloring to his conversation and his writings, but rarely, if ever, influencing his actions. It was a poetic sentiment.

Scott was a Tory, to the backbone. Had he come into the world half a century sooner, he would, no doubt, have made a figure under the banner of the Pretender. He was at no great pains to disguise his political creed; witness his jolly drinking song on the acquittal of Lord Melville. This was verse; but his prose is not much more qualified. "As for Whiggery in general," he says, in one of his letters, "I can only say, that as no man can be said to be utterly overset until his rump has been higher than his head, so I cannot read in history of any free state which has been brought to slavery, until the rascal and uninstructed populace had had their short hour of anarchical government, which naturally leads to the

stern repose of military despotism. . . . With these convictions, I am very jealous of Whiggery, under all modifications; and I must say, my acquaintance with the total want of principle in some of its warmest professors does not tend to recommend it." With all this, however, his Toryism was not, practically, of that sort, which blunts a man's sensibilities for those who are not of the same porcelain clay with himself. No man, Whig or Radical, ever had less of this pretension, or treated his inferiors with greater kindness, and, indeed, familiarity; a circumstance noticed by every visiter at his hospitable mansion, who saw him strolling round his grounds, taking his pinch of snuff out of the mull of some "grey-haired old hedger," or leaning on honest Tom Purdie's shoulder, and taking sweet counsel as to the right method of thinning a plantation. But, with all this familiarity, no man was better served by his domestics. It was the service of love; the only service that power cannot command, and money cannot buy.

Akin to the feelings of which we have been speaking, was the truly chivalrous sense of honor, which stamped his whole conduct. We do not mean that Hotspur honor, which is roused only by the drum and fife, — though he says of himself, "I like the sound of a drum as well as Uncle Toby ever did," — but that honor which is deep-seated in the heart of every true gentleman, shrinking with sensitive delicacy from the least stain, or imputation of a stain on his faith. "If we lose every thing else," writes he, on a trying occasion, to a friend who was not so nice in this particular, "we will at least keep our honor unblemished." It reminds one of the pithy epistle of a kindred chivalrous spirit, Francis the First, to his mother, from the unlucky field of Pavia; "Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur." Scott's latter years furnished a noble commentary on the sincerity of his manly principles.

Little is said directly of his religious sentiments, in the biography. They seem to have harmonized well with his political. He was a member of the English Church, a stanch champion of established forms, and a sturdy enemy to every thing that savored of the sharp twang of Puritanism. On this ground, indeed, the youthful Sampson used to wrestle manfully with worthy Dominie Mitchell, who, no doubt, furnished many a screed of doctrine for the Rev. Peter Poundtext, Master Nehemiah Holdenough, and other lights of the Cove-

nant. Scott was no friend to cant, under any form. But, whatever were his speculative opinions, in practice his heart overflowed with that charity which is the life-spring of our religion. And whenever he takes occasion to allude to the subject directly, he testifies a deep reverence for the truths of revelation, as well as for its divine Original.

Whatever estimate be formed of Scott's moral qualities, his intellectual were of a kind which well entitled him to the epithet conferred on Lope de Vega, "*monstruo de naturaleza*," "a miracle of nature." His mind, indeed, did not seem to be subjected to the same laws which control the rest of his species. His memory, as is usual, was the first of his powers fully developed. While an urchin at school, he could repeat whole cantos, he says, of Ossian and of Spenser. In riper years, we are constantly meeting with similar feats of his achievement. Thus, on one occasion, he repeated the whole of a poem in some penny Magazine, incidentally alluded to, which he had not seen since he was a schoolboy. On another, when the Ettrick Shepherd was trying ineffectually to fish up from his own recollections some scraps of a ballad he had himself manufactured, years before, Scott called to him, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I will tell it to you, word for word;" and he accordingly did so. But it is needless to multiply examples of feats so startling as to look almost like the tricks of a conjuror.

What is most extraordinary is, that while he acquired with such facility, that the bare perusal, or the repetition of a thing once to him, was sufficient, he yet retained it with the greatest pertinacity. Other men's memories are so much jostled in the rough and tumble of life, that most of the facts get sifted out, nearly as fast as they are put in; so that we are in the same pickle with those unlucky daughters of Danaus, of schoolboy memory, obliged to spend the greater part of the time in replenishing. But Scott's memory seemed to be hermetically sealed, suffering nothing once fairly in to leak out again. This was of immense service to him, when he took up the business of authorship; as his whole multifarious stock of facts, whether from books or observation, became in truth his stock in trade, ready furnished to his hands. This may explain in part, — though it is not less marvellous, — the cause of his rapid execution of works, often replete with rare and curious information. The labor, the preparation, had

been already completed. His whole life had been a business of preparation. When he ventured, as in the case of "Rokeby" and of "Quentin Durward," on ground with which he had not been familiar, we see how industriously he set about new acquisitions.

In most of the prodigies of memory which we have ever known, the overgrowth of that faculty seems to have been attained at the expense of all the others. But in Scott, the directly opposite power of the imagination, — the inventive power, — was equally strongly developed, and at the same early age. For we find him renowned for story-craft, while at school. How many a delightful fiction, indeed, warm with the flush of ingenuous youth, did he not throw away on the ears of thoughtless childhood, which, had they been duly registered, might now have amused children of a larger growth. We have seen Scott's genius in its prime and its decay. The frolic graces of childhood are alone wanting.

The facility with which he threw his ideas into language, was also remarked very early. One of his first ballads, and a long one, was dashed off at the dinner table. His "Lay" was written at the rate of a canto a week. "Waverley," or rather the last two volumes of it, cost the evenings of a summer month. Who that has ever read the account can forget the movements of that mysterious hand, as descried by the two students from the window of a neighbouring attic, throwing off sheet after sheet, with untiring rapidity, of the pages destined to immortality? Scott speaks pleasantly enough of this marvellous facility, in a letter to his friend Morritt. "When once I set my pen to the paper, it will walk fast enough. I am sometimes tempted to leave it alone, and see whether it will not write as well without the assistance of my head as with it. A hopeful prospect for the reader."

As to the time and place of composition, he appears to have been nearly indifferent. He possessed entire power of abstraction, and it mattered little whether he were nailed to his clerk's desk, under the drowsy eloquence of some long-winded barrister, or dashing his horse into the surf on Portobello sands, or rattling in a postchaise, or amidst the hum of guests in his overflowing halls at Abbotsford, — it mattered not, the same well adjusted little packet, "nicely corded and sealed," was sure to be ready, at the regular time, for the Edinburgh mail. His own account of his composition, to a friend who

asked when he found time for it, is striking enough. "O," said Scott, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up, — and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *projet de chapitre*, — and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a doze in the plantations, and, while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain, as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world." Never indeed did this sort of simmering produce such a splendid bill of fare,

The quality of the material, under such circumstances, is, in truth, the great miracle of the whole. The execution of so much work, as a mere feat of penmanship, would, undoubtedly, be very extraordinary; but, as a mere scrivener's miracle, would be hardly worth recording. It is a sort of miracle that is every day performing under our own eyes, as it were, by Messrs. (James) Bulwer, & Co., who, in all the various staples of "comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral," &c., &c., supply their own market and ours too, with all that can be wanted. In Spain and in Italy, too, we may find abundance of *improvvisatori* and *improvvisatrici*, who perform miracles of the same sort, in verse, too, in languages whose vowel terminations make it very easy for the thoughts to tumble into rhyme, without any malice prepense. Governor Raffles, in his account of Java, tells us of a splendid avenue of trees before his house, which in the course of a year shot up to the height of forty feet. But who shall compare the brief, transitory splendors of a fungus vegetation with the mighty monarch of the forest, sending his roots deep into the heart of the earth, and his branches, amid storm and sunshine, to the heavens? And is not the latter the true emblem of Scott? For, who can doubt that his prose creations, at least, will gather strength with time, living on through succeeding generations, even when the language in which they are written, like those of Greece and Rome, shall cease to be a living language?

The only writer deserving, in these respects, to be named with Scott, is Lope de Vega, who in his own day held as high a rank in the republic of letters, as our great contemporary. The beautiful dramas which he threw off for the entertainment of the capital, and whose success drove Cervantes from the stage, outstripped the abilities of an amanuensis

to copy. His intimate friend, Montalvan, one of the most popular and prolific authors of the time, tells us, that he undertook with Lope once to supply the theatre with a comedy, — in verse, and in three acts, as the Spanish dramas usually were, — at a very short notice. In order to get through his half as soon as his partner, he rose by two in the morning, and at eleven had completed it ; an extraordinary feat, certainly, since a play extended to between thirty and forty pages, of a hundred lines each. Walking into the garden, he found his brother poet pruning an orange tree. “Well, how do you get on?” said Montalvan. “Very well,” answered Lope. “I rose betimes, — at five ; and after I had got through, eat my breakfast ; since which I have written a letter of fifty triplets, and watered the whole of the garden, which has tired me a good deal.”

But a little arithmetic will best show the comparative fertility of Scott and Lope de Vega. It is so germane to the present matter, that we shall make no apology for transcribing here some computations from our last July number ; and as few of our readers, we suspect, have the air-tight memory of Sir Walter, we doubt not that enough of it has escaped them by this time to excuse us from equipping it with one of those “cocked hats and walking-sticks,” with which he furbished up an old story.

“It is impossible to state the results of Lope de Vega’s labors in any form that will not powerfully strike the imagination. Thus, he has left twenty-one million three hundred thousand verses in print, besides a mass of manuscript. He furnished the theatre, according to the statement of his intimate friend, Montalvan, with eighteen hundred regular plays, and four hundred *autos* or religious dramas, — all acted. He composed, according to his own statement, more than one hundred comedies in the almost incredible space of twenty-four hours each ; and a comedy averaged between two and three thousand verses, great part of them rhymed, and interspersed with sonnets, and other more difficult forms of versification. He lived seventy-two years ; and supposing him to have employed fifty of that period in composition, although he filled a variety of engrossing vocations during that time, he must have averaged a play a week, to say nothing of twenty-one volumes, quarto, of miscellaneous works, including five epics, written in his leisure moments, and all now in print !

“The only achievements we can recall in literary history, bearing any resemblance to, though falling far short of this, are

those of our illustrious contemporary, Sir Walter Scott. The complete edition of his works, recently advertised by Murray, with the addition of two volumes, of which Murray has not the copyright, probably contains ninety volumes, small octavo. [To these should further be added, a large supply of matter for the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, as well as other anonymous contributions.] Of these, forty-eight volumes of novels, and twenty-one of history and biography, were produced between 1814 and 1831, or in seventeen years. These would give an average of four volumes a year, or one for every three months during the whole of that period; to which must be added twenty-one volumes of poetry and prose, previously published. The mere mechanical execution of so much work, both in his case and Lope de Vega's, would seem to be scarce possible, in the limits assigned. Scott, too, was as variously occupied in other ways as his Spanish rival; and probably, from the social hospitality of his life, spent a much larger portion of his time in no literary occupation at all."

Of all the wonderful dramatic creations of Lope de Vega's genius, what now remains? Two or three plays only keep possession of the stage, and few, very few, are still read with pleasure in the closet. They have never been collected into a uniform edition, and are now met with in scattered sheets only on the shelves of some mousing bookseller, or collected in miscellaneous parcels in the libraries of the curious.

Scott, with all his facility of execution, had none of that pitiable affectation, sometimes found in men of genius, who think that the possession of this quality may dispense with regular, methodical habits of study. He was most economical of time. He did not, like Voltaire, speak of it as "a terrible thing that so much time should be wasted in talking." He was too little of a pedant, and far too benevolent, not to feel that there are other objects worth living for, than mere literary fame. But he grudged the waste of time on merely frivolous and heartless objects. "As for dressing, when we are quite alone," he remarked one day to Mr. Gillies, whom he had taken home with him to a family dinner, "it is out of the question. Life is not long enough for such fiddle-faddle." In the early part of his life he worked late at night. But subsequently, from a conviction of the superior healthiness of early rising, as well as the desire to secure, at all hazards, a portion of the day for literary labor, he rose at five, the year round; no small effort, as any one will admit, who has seen

the pain and difficulty which a regular bird of night finds in reconciling his eyes to daylight. He was scrupulously exact, moreover, in the distribution of his hours. In one of his letters to his friend Terry, the player, replete, as usual, with advice that seems to flow equally from the head and the heart, he says, in reference to the practice of *dawdling* away one's time, "A habit of the mind it is which is very apt to beset men of intellect and talent, especially when their time is not regularly filled up, but left to their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion. I must love a man so well to whom I offer such a word of advice, that I will not apologize for it, but expect to hear you are become *as regular as a Dutch clock, — hours, quarters, minutes, all marked and appropriated.*" With the same emphasis he inculcates the like habits on his son. If any man might dispense with them, it was surely Scott. But he knew that without them the greatest powers of mind will run to waste, and water but the desert.

Some of the literary opinions of Scott are singular, considering, too, the position he occupied in the world of letters. "I promise you," he says, in an epistle to an old friend, "my oaks will outlast my laurels ; and I pique myself more on my compositions for manure, than on any other compositions to which I was ever accessory." This may seem *badi-nage*. But he repeatedly, both in writing and conversation, places literature, as a profession, below other intellectual professions, and especially the military. The Duke of Wellington, the representative of the last, seems to have drawn from him a very extraordinary degree of deference, which, we cannot but think, smacks a little of that strong relish for gunpowder, which he avows in himself.

It is not very easy to see on what this low estimate of literature rested. As a profession, it has too little in common with more active ones, to afford much ground for running a parallel. The soldier has to do with externals ; and his contests and triumphs are over matter, in its various forms, whether of man or material nature. The poet deals with the bodiless forms of air, of fancy lighter than air. His business is contemplative ; the other's is active, and depends for its success on strong moral energy, and presence of mind. He must, indeed, have genius of the highest order, to effect his

own combinations, anticipate the movements of his enemy, and dart with eagle eye on his vulnerable point. But who shall say that this practical genius, if we may so term it, is to rank higher in the scale, than the creative power of the poet, the spark from the mind of divinity itself?

The orator might seem to afford better ground for comparison, since, though his theatre of action is abroad, he may be said to work with much the same tools as the writer. Yet, how much of his success depends on qualities other than intellectual. "Action," said the father of eloquence, "action, action, are the three most essential things to an orator." How much, indeed, depends on the look, the gesture, the magical tones of voice, modulated to the passions he has stirred; and how much on the contagious sympathies of the audience itself, which drown every thing like criticism in the overwhelming tide of emotion. If any one would know how much, let him, after patiently standing

"till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,"

read the same speech in the columns of a morning newspaper, or in the well concocted report of the orator himself. The productions of the writer are subjected to a fiercer ordeal. He has no excited sympathies of numbers to hurry his readers along over his blunders. He is scanned in the calm silence of the closet. Every flower of fancy seems here to wilt under the rude breath of criticism; every link in the chain of argument is subjected to the touch of prying scrutiny, and if there be the least flaw in it, it is sure to be detected. There is no tribunal so stern as the secret tribunal of a man's own closet, far removed from all the sympathetic impulses of humanity. Surely there is no form in which *intellect* can be exhibited to the world so completely stripped of all adventitious aids, as the form of written composition. But, says the practical man, let us estimate things by their utility. "You talk of the poems of Homer," said a mathematician, "but, after all, what do they *prove*?" A question which involves an answer somewhat too voluminous for the tail of an article. But, if the poems of Homer were, as Heeren asserts, the principal bond which held the Grecian states together, and gave them a national feeling, they "prove," more than all the arithmeticians of Greece, — and there were many

cunning ones in it, — ever did. The results of military skill, are, indeed, obvious. The soldier, by a single victory, enlarges the limits of an empire ; he may do more, — he may achieve the liberties of a nation, or roll back the tide of barbarism, ready to overwhelm them. Wellington was placed in such a position, and nobly did he do his work, — or rather, he was placed at the head of such a gigantic moral and physical apparatus, as enabled him to do it. With his own unassisted strength, of course, he could have done nothing. But it is on his own solitary resources, that the great writer is to rely. And yet, who shall say, that the triumphs of Wellington have been greater than those of Scott, — whose works are familiar as household words, to every fireside in his own land, from the castle to the cottage ; have crossed oceans and deserts, and, with healing on their wings, found their way to the remotest regions ; have helped to form the character, until his own mind may be said to be incorporated into those of hundreds of thousands of his fellow-men ? Who is there, that has not, at some time or other, felt the heaviness of his heart lightened, his pains mitigated, and his bright moments of life made still brighter, by the magical touches of his genius ? And shall we speak of his victories as less real, less serviceable to humanity, less truly glorious, than those of the greatest captain of his day ? The triumphs of the warrior are bounded by the narrow theatre of his own age. But those of a Scott, or a Shakspeare, will be renewed, with greater and greater lustre, in ages yet unborn, when the victorious chieftain shall be forgotten, or shall live only in the song of the minstrel, and the page of the chronicler.

But, after all, this sort of parallel is not very gracious, nor very philosophical ; and, to say truth, is somewhat foolish. We have been drawn into it by the not random, but very deliberate, and, in our poor judgment, very disparaging estimate by Scott, of his own vocation ; and as we have taken the trouble to write it, our readers will excuse us from blotting it out. There is too little ground for the respective parties to stand on, for a parallel. As to the pedantic *cui bono* standard, it is impossible to tell the final issues of a single act ; how can we then hope to, those of a course of action ? As for the *honor* of different vocations, there never was a truer sentence than the stale one of Pope, — stale now because it is so true, —

“ Act well your part, there all the honor lies.”

And it is the just boast of our own country, that in no civilized nation is the force of this philanthropic maxim so nobly illustrated, as in ours ; — thanks to our glorious institutions.

A great cause, probably, of Scott's low estimate of letters, was the facility with which he wrote himself. What costs us little, we are apt to prize little. If diamonds were as common as pebbles, and gold dust as any other, who would stoop to gather them? It was the prostitution of his muse, by the by, for this same gold dust, which brought a sharp rebuke on the poet, from Lord Byron, in his "English Bards" ;

" For this we spurn Apollo's venal son ; "

a coarse cut, and the imputation about as true as most satire, — that is, not true at all. This was indited in his lordship's earlier days, when he most chivalrously disclaimed all purpose of bartering his rhymes for gold. He lived long enough, however, to weigh his literary wares in as nice a money-balance, as any more vulgar manufacturer ever did. And, in truth, it would be ridiculous if the produce of the brain should not bring its price, in this form, as well as any other ; — there is little danger, we imagine, of finding too much gold in the bowels of Parnassus.

Scott took a more sensible view of things. In a letter to Ellis, written soon after the publication of the "Minstrelsy," he observes, " People may say this and that of the pleasure of fame, or of profit, as a motive of writing, I think the only pleasure is in the actual exertion and research, and I would no more write upon any other terms, than I would hunt merely to dine upon hare-soup. At the same time, if credit and profit came unlooked for, I would no more quarrel with them than with the soup." Even this declaration was somewhat more magnanimous than was warranted by his subsequent conduct. The truth is, he soon found out, especially after the Waverley vein had opened, that he had hit on a gold mine. The prodigious returns he got, gave the whole thing the aspect of a speculation. Every new work was an adventure ; and the proceeds naturally suggested the indulgence of the most extravagant schemes of expense, which, in their turn, stimulated him to fresh efforts. In this way, the "profits" became, whatever they might have been once, a principal incentive to, as they were the recompense of, exertion. His productions were cash articles, and were estimated by him

more on the Hudibrastic rule of "the real worth of a thing," than by any fanciful standard of fame. He bowed with deference to the judgment of the booksellers, and trimmed his sails dexterously, as the "aura popularis" shifted. "If it is na weil bobbet," he writes to his printer, on turning out a less lucky novel, "we'll bobb it again." His muse was of that school who seek the greatest happiness of the greatest possible number. We can hardly imagine him invoking her, like Milton,

"Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few."

Still less can we imagine him, like the blind old bard, feeding his soul with visions of posthumous glory, and spinning out epics for five pounds apiece.

It is singular that Scott, although he set as high a money value on his productions as the most enthusiastic of the "trade" could have done, in a literary view, should have held them so cheap. "Whatever others may be," he said, "I have never been a partisan of my own poetry; as John Wilkes declared, that, 'in the height of his success, he had himself never been a Wilkite.'" Considering the poet's popularity, this was but an indifferent compliment to the taste of his age. With all this disparagement of his own productions, however, Scott was not insensible to criticism. He says somewhere, indeed, that "if he had been conscious of a single vulnerable point in himself, he would not have taken up the business of writing." But on another occasion he writes, "I make it a rule never to read the attacks made upon me." And Captain Hall remarks, "He never reads the criticisms on his books; this I know, from the most unquestionable authority. Praise, he says, gives him no pleasure, and censure annoys him." Madame de Graffigny says, also, of Voltaire, "that he was altogether indifferent to praise, but the least word from his enemies drove him crazy." Yet both these authors banqueted on the sweets of panegyric as much as any who ever lived. They were in the condition of an epicure, whose palate has lost its relish for the dainty fare in which it has been so long revelling, without becoming less sensible to the annoyances of sharper and coarser flavors. It may afford some consolation to humble mediocrity, to the less fortunate votaries of the muse, that those who have reached the summit of Parnassus, are not much more con-

tented with their condition, than those who are scrambling among the bushes at the bottom of the mountain. The fact seems to be, as Scott himself intimates more than once, that the joy is in the chase ; whether in the prose or the poetry of life.

But it is high time to terminate our lucubrations ; which, however imperfect and unsatisfactory, have already run to a length that must trespass on the patience of the reader. We rise from the perusal of these delightful volumes, with the same sort of melancholy feeling with which we wake from a pleasant dream. The concluding volume, of which such ominous presage is given in the last sentence of the fifth, has not yet reached us ; but we know enough to anticipate the sad catastrophe it is to unfold, of the drama. In those which we have seen, however, we have beheld a succession of interesting characters come upon the scene, — and pass away to their long home. “ Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced,” seem to haunt us, too, as we write. The imagination reverts to Abbotsford, — the romantic and once brilliant Abbotsford, — the magical creation of *his* hands. We see its halls radiant with the hospitality of *his* benevolent heart ; thronged with pilgrims from every land, assembled to pay homage at the shrine of genius ; echoing to the blithe music of those festal holidays, when young and old met to renew the usages of the good old times.

“ These were its charms, — but all these charms are fled.”

Its courts are desolate, or trodden only by the foot of the stranger. The stranger sits under the shadows of the trees which his hand planted. The spell of the enchanter is dissolved. His wand is broken. And the mighty Minstrel himself now sleeps in the bosom of the peaceful scenes, embellished by his taste, and which his genius has made immortal.
